FDD NewsLetter

February - March 1992
Volume 1 Number 7

Yet Another Combo Issue

Sorry I'm late again, folks, but at least I got this issue out! No need to bore you with details, so let's get into the nitty-gritty. Well, yes, I have been busy.

Your Letters Dept.

I've received many letters since the last 2 issues of the newsletter that I've published and I'd like to share them with you, the reader. I feel that this newsletter should serve as a clearing house of information related to our disk system, specifically, and the Timex community, in general.

First, I was notified that Zebra Systems was back in business somewhere in the 718 area code. The telephone # given me was 625-6220. I advise everyone NOT to call this #. I was informed by the person (who wishes to remain anonymous) that there appears to be a computerized DTMF (aka Touch-Tone) menu selection system operating @ this #. There appears to be support for IBM & Commodore Amigas, but alas, no Timex.

I received a brief letter from the South Bay Computer Club, the Timex/Sinclair Users' Group. They wrote:

Hi Jay,
First: Update your mailing list.
Second: Contact Gilbert R. Castillo and give him my and Ed Grey's address/phone number.

Maybe he would be interested in one of our groups.

Ed Grey is our local CP/M expert and his BBS covers the USA, etc. as an information exchange for CP/M and T/S users.

Well that's about all for now.

Hope you had a Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year.

The next meeting will be held with the West Side ZX Group on Sat. Feb. 15, 1992 @ 10:15 a.m.

The location is:
Westside Pavilion
Community Meeting Room
3rd Floor - S.E. corner
10800 W. Pico Blvd.
Westwood, Ca.

Use the Overland entrance for parking.

24 hr BBS 1(213)971-6260

John W. Petersen
Dec. 27, 1991

Well, John, I've given Gilbert the information that you asked me to pass onto him & advised him to attend a users's group meeting in his area so that he can enjoy his FDD computing even more.

I received a couple of postcards from Joan Kealy of Brackettville, Texas. The one dated 12/28/91 reads:

Dear Jay,
(1) Congrats on marriage!
(2) Crud on people (pd & unpaid) who won't let a fellow ?????? (undecipherable) a bit on his life.
(3) Tech Draw Sr. is for sale from Jack Dohany.
Hang in,
Joan

Thanks, Joan, on the first 2 items on the list. I received Tech Draw Sr. from Jack Dohany as well as some very important news for all FDD users with CP/M capability. Jack's letter is further down in this newsletter.

The other postcard that I received, dated 2/4/92, reads:

Dear Jay,

As I recollect, CP/M had to be built into Zebra System - special chip or such. If there's no a way to buy & use CP/M W/O the special adaptation of Zebra system, - what are you charging for disks - 3" disk & what? If not possible w/o special chip, how many people ever bought CP/M Zebra system? If very few, then you are going on about something that is a minuscule SIG to FDD. These are rhetorical questions you can answer in N/L. CP/M progs all public domain?

Sincerely,
J. Kealy

Joan, no special chip is needed to run CP/M on the Zebra FDD System. You will need to have 64k of RAM in the controller box, if yours is the old silver 3-piece system. The person whom you should contact for any modifications to the FDD disk system is:

Nazir Pashtoon
940 Beau Drive, Apt. 204
Des Plaines, Illinois
600??
Telephone #: 1(708)439-1679

If anyone out there in the readership desires to get CP/M or the Spectrum disk system with the necessary emulator cartridge, contact Nazir for the modifications. He is 100% qualified to do the work, having been a Zebra Systems engineering consultant in the past.

I'm not charging anything for my services. The main goal of my offer is so that you will end up using your Timex/Sinclair & your FDD system longer & not need to upgrade to an IBM clone, MacIntosh, Amiga, or whatever else.

As far as CP/M being a minuscule SIG within the FDD community, I don't feel that's the case. Although every FDD disk system owner does not necessarily have CP/M on there system, the potential is there for them to request from Nazir an upgrade. I want that possibility to be known & advertised within our community. Why spend hundreds of dollars for a clone when, for a fraction of the cost, you can get your system modified, if needed, & run some very powerful software under CP/M? True,

it's not an MS-DOS system with all its advantages, but for those like me, just scraping by, it's a viable alternative. Although CP/M is easier to learn than MS-DOS, due to the obvious fact that CP/M has less commands than MS-DOS, it is a bit more cryptic. However, MS-DOS had its origins in CP/M. (The original MS-DOS ver. 1.? was written by a company called Seattle Computer Systems which was bought up by MicroSoft. This version of 'DOS was written with the help of stolen CP/M operating system source code written by Digital Research.)

To answer your last question, not all CP/M programs are public domain. For example, I contacted a company called MicroStuff (before they changed their name to something a little more respectable-sounding) a couple of years ago and asked them if they still sell the CP/M version of CrossTalk. They said no. I then asked them if I would find somebody in the CP/M community that had it if I could copy theirs. I was put on hold for a long time & finally was given this answer: The only way legally that I could obtain the CP/M version of CrossTalk was to find someone selling theirs. This could be a long time till I finally come across it (I still haven't). This leads me to a point out of all this nonsense. When the company that no longer sells the CP/M version tells you that you can't buy a legitimate version of the program and tells you to go on a treasure hunt, it leaves one feeling mighty frustrated. What happens when you find the person with the software you want but doesn't want to sell it to you or, more honestly, will sell it to you, but without the manual (Gee, I lost it!). I mean, doesn't that telegraph to you that that person still has an original "copy", if you know what I mean?

Some of these CP/M programs are still being sold. They are advertised in a publication called "The Computer Journal". More about this fine publication in the next newsletter.

Now, on to a lengthy letter from Donald Lambert in Auburn, Indiana, dated 12/27/92.

Dear Jay,

Your newsletter came today and I am glad it jogged my mind. I am not familiar with the FDD interface outside of what my pen pal Joan Kealy has said. And now I got her involved with the LarKen interface. But back to the purpose of this letter.

Is there a Public Domain Librarian for the FDD? I am not trying to convert anyone from or to any disk interface but with the newsletter ZXir @Live Alive! we are trying to establish Public Domain Software Librarians for every disk interface and also the cassette software. So I do want a cassette Librarian for both the T/S 2068 and the T/S 1000. So far we have a T/S 2068 Oliger Librarian and a T/S LarKen Librarian. I do want a cassette Librarian both for the T/S 2068 and the T/S 1000. So of the disk interfaces that I know of for sure that leaves the FDD T/S 2068, the T/S 2068 AERCo, the ZX81 AERCo and the ZX81 LarKen and the cassettes for both without librarians.

I notice that in the newsletter that you mention software and maybe you could get copies to someone if and when. That really points up the need for a software Librarian. What makes it difficult is that so much software is in one DOS and unless you have the correct marriage (no laundry washing here) like I have with the LarKen/Oliger you sometimes can LOAD from one SAVE to the other. And that does make it a lot more simple to exchange software. But that marriage is rather prejudiced in that it can be performed between the AERCo and LarKen, the Oliger and LarKen and, I think, Ramex and LarKen. And with the Larken the common denominator it is possible to get the file into LarKen and if you know someone that has the other marriage you can then transfer the file from say Oliger to AERCo. But that is just thinking from the top of my head since I have not seen it done or even heard of it being done.

I will have to see if Bob Swoger can bend Nazir Pashtoon's arm for me (Bob is very big fellow) and get a copy of that Portuguese (80 column s/w - Ed.) program. Or I can write to Andy Hradesky. I met Andy at the Dayton Computerfest and he explained his name - that the "H" on his last name is something the immigration people put on everyone's name that came from a certain area. The "H" is there but like the "K" in "knee" is just there in writing since it is silent.

I will make you a trifle jealous. For the LarKen DOS there is a software (and public domain) called the D.U.S. disk. Among the programs is one called COPYII.B1. If you have two disk drives with the same density and head speed, like two identical drives, then the program will copy a disk from one drive to another. But! wait it copies starting from track 0 and that means it copies the directory and also the disk name! But wait there is more it shows on the screen reading track 0 track 1, track 2, track 3, track 4. Then it is reporting SAVing those tracks - RIGHT it is doing five tracks at a time. But wait! I saw open that box of disks and those are new disks and you put one in the drive. Perfectly all right, as it does all that work it also FORMATs the disk as the original disk is FORMATted. So if it was FORMATted single sided that is what the copy will end up and if it was FORMATted to 43 tracks then the copy disk will be, too, even if all the files on it take up only five blocks. And it is fast enough that it almost will do all that while you are typing up a label to put on a disk.

Now, I admit that I am not paying anything for the newsletter, I can't afford them all and besides it is for a different DOS (although there is a lot of useful information in the newsletter) but I would like to help out. Is there anything that you are looking for? Software? Hardware? Hardcopy? Never know where the connection can be made. John Shepard called me that he was looking for a used Z88 and I told him used ones were rare. Then I saw one listed in CATS some weeks later and called him and gave him the information. Later, I got a call from him that it was being shipped. I normally don't make phone calls but I felt this was more in the way of an emergency.

I upgraded to a new printer this month. I was using an Okidata 82A and all it could do was draft quality and no fancy printing. And there was other stuff I wanted to do. I tried a Citizen 200GX, nice printer but it won't work without all new software so I took it back. I ended up with an EPSON LX-810

and it is really nice. One of the features I wanted was the single sheet feed and that makes it possible to print easily on the back side of a page. The only advice I can give in looking for a printer is look at the manual. If there is a section devoted to using the IBM word processors then beware. If it is on line or so then it might be workable with the T/S 2068. Oh yes - I am using John Oligers's printer interface. Be sure to pay for a ribbon cable from printer interface to the printer if you buy one and yes you will need the Oliger mother board. The mother board also has the RGB circuitry installed.

As a retired person I should have more time to get things done but the other side of the coin is that time just seems to fly, I suspect that I am slower than before. And I do get into more involved things. And my lack of programming abilities and my low hardwaring abilities make any new project take forever or so it seems.

That diary program may be what I need. I have a disk that is labelled DIARY - LOG OF ACTIVITIES. In that I log the incoming T/S mail and the outgoing T/S stuff. That way I can know if I am expecting replies too soon. Or when I got a reply. I name the files by the month now. I just list the day of the week like Friday 12 27 1991. Mailed letter to Jay S. Siegel. I need no further information since I can LOAD the correspondence file and look for a file 1227siegel (ten characters for a file name on the Oliger).

TIMEX/SINCLAIR STILL LIVES.

Sincerely yours,
Donald S. Lambert

Don, I don't know of any Public Domain (PD) Librarian for the FDD. I don't think I'd be the one volunteering for it. The FDD disk system runs up to 3 separate operating systems - TOS, Spectrum disk mode, and CP/M 2.2. My collection of programs under the TOS mode is quite paltry & under the Spectrum disk mode, almost non-existent. Other than graphics programs and a few games that I never use, most of my computing is done in CP/M 2.2 I'm not retired; I must work for a living. My livelihood is that of a COBOL programmer/analyst. Being a programmer isn't your regular 9 to 5 job. Overtime is constantly required of me in my position. I wonder if anyone out there can help Don out. Hey, Joan, what about you? I am also the proud owner of a LarKen dual-disk system for the T/S 1000 series computer as well as an owner of the quirky ZX-99 tape operating system for the 1000. Let us know who are the librarians for what hardware, Don.

If you're trying to make me jealous, we FDD owners also have a disk copy utility that came with our boot disk, "DEMO", however, our disks need to be FORMATted before running the copy program (BACKUP). That is not sufficient enough, though, in my mind, to convince someone to sell their FDD and purchase the LarKen system as a replacement.

Congratulations on your new printer. I do remember seeing an ad from a company called Central Computer Products, 330 Central Avenue, Fillmore, California, 93015, telephone # - 1(800)456-4123 that offered an EPROM called PC-Writer for the Okidata ML82A & 83A (I still have the '83A). The PC-Writer gives your 82A or 83A the latest IBM Graphics Printer capabilities, including the full IBM Character Set, 10,12, & 17 pitch text, IBM/Epson-compatible graphics, and super smart looking near letter quality. You get all these features via software controller by simply touching the three buttons on your control panel. Does everything Okigraph, Plug-n-Play and Graftrax do and more. Comes complete with manual. Price was $79.

I've got the Okigraph EPROM set and the Super-Speed RS232C serial interface installed in my '83A. I'd love to get the PC-Writer EPROM, but it's tough when you're perpetually broke, too. I'd also like to get the RS-422 interface for the '83A. Maybe one day I will.

The Diary program was accidentally copied onto the disk that Andy H. sent me. He called me to tell me that it wasn't PD s/w, so I promptly ERASEd * it. Sorry.

I received a disk with a letter from James Wilson in Akron, Ohio, dated 12/27/91.

Dear Jay,

I would like to receive the 80 column disk that you offered in your newsletter. There's no rush to return this disk.

I have a question concerning the CP/M mode. My system crashes using the TASMAN interface but works with the AERCo. I am assuming my interface is a TASMAN B and the system is set for the TASMAN C. Would you know the different number to POKE and at what address if this would solve my problem.

Thank you,
James Wilson

James, I sent you the disk a while ago, as you know. The printer interface problem that you're experiencing is something that I can't help you with. Maybe Nazir Pashtoon or Jack Dohany can provide an answer.

I received a letter from Ike Walker, now in Boynton Beach, Florida, dated 12/29/91.

Hi!

I do not have FDD.

I do have Oliger TOS / 2068 / C. Itoh printer 8510A / Olivetti PR2300.

I would like to have a cassette of the Portugal 80 column software.

Enclosing cassette.

Please advise how much $ I can send to you for your trouble.

Thanks,
Ike

Sorry that it's taken me almost forever to send you that cassette. Hope that it's LOADed OK & that you enjoy it. As far as how much; how's about pro bono? If that isn't good enough, then send me something as a contribution to help me publish this newsletter. Ike also enclosed return postage & his winter address.

From Mike Potter in DeKalb, Illinois, a letter dated 12/30/91 reads:

Dear Jay,

Thank you for sending the back issues of your newsletter! I think that it's great you were able to get it going again. I have enclosed ten dollars for a subscription and a couple for the back issues.

I am embarrassed to say that I have not used my FDD in quite a long time now. Once in a while I do fire up the 2068, but without the drives. Mainly this is because, as you know most of the software I use is from England and is copy-protected thus making it difficult to convert it to disk. The FDD needs an NMI switch!!! Isn't anyone going to develop this? I found my old receipts for my FDD the other day and found that I spent more for just the FDD than I could build a bare-bones 40 MHz 80386 DOS machine now!

The above paragraph illustrates my problem with drives and the Spectrum. I believe what I am going to do is invest in a new drive system. Probably the +D interface from England, but I may lean towards an American system. I think the British System is cheaper. In the meantime, I will use the FDD to the best of my abilities.

It would be nice to see a list of FDD users in your newsletter...perhaps with name and address? Also I would like to see more on the Spectrum/2068 side of the FDD and less on CP/M. I don't know what the majority of your readers want though, so keep up the good work nonetheless!

Even though I am now firmly entrenched in the DOS world, I would not give up my Spectrum or Sinclair heritage for anything! I am still constantly amazed at what those programmers are kicking out overseas!

Remember Jay . . . Keep on Timexin'

Sincerely,
Mike

It's good to hear from you, Mike! I'm still amazed at your attitude towards the FDD remains fervent. I plan to go visiting the Chicago metropolitan area sometime in the 3rd weekend in April, the same weekend that, unfortunately for me, is the Dayton, Ohio, HamVention @ the Hara Arena. I know that you must be the person that has the most Spectrum game software on the FDD disk system under the Spectrum disk mode. I'd like to come over & visit with you & whatever... If ever there was a person who could be the FDD Spectrum disk mode librarian, it would be you, Mike! Nobody I know of has the amount of Spectrum games that you do on disk format. By the way, for those who want to attend an electronics flea market, don't miss the Dayton HamVention. Although there is a ComputerFest there sometime in August, the HamVention is THE event of the year for Ham Radio operators. Used computers can be picked up for a song there. All in all, it's a great 3-day event starting on Friday that's not to be missed. There are even arts & crafts seminars for the women. But book in advance because every hotel & motel room in Dayton will be booked solid.

Yes, our FDD system sorely needs an NMI switch! How about it, Nazir or Jack?

I also paid over $400 to buy my system at the time. It was after I saw your FDD3000, Mike, that convinced me that it was the system I wanted. Nothing less than a purebred Timex system for me! The ability of having the extended BASIC use random files & the possibility of CP/M, plus a Spectrum disk mode made me go bananas. It still is the super disk system I imagined it would be since the day I bought it.

I would like to put out an issue in the near future (maybe in 1 or 2 more issues) where I would print out the mailing list. I store it in dBASE II .DBF format. If anyone does not wish to appear on the list with their address and/or telephone #, please drop me a postcard stating so. Speaking of postcards, I lost all your postcards that you mailed back to me that I sent out in my first edition of this newsletter. Besides, when I asked you to fill in the uses that you use your system for, just about nobody filled it in correctly. I hope to send out another bunch of postcard surveys and this time promptly enter it into my computer. It got thrown out by accident when we got the apt. painted.

I received a letter from Earl V. Dunnington in Boynton Beach, Florida, dated 01/03/92. It truly saddened my heart. Earl, as some of you know, was an avid Timex/Sinclair computer user. His articles have appeared in the most prominent U.S. Timex publications. He wrote articles ranging from the T/S 1000 to the T/S 2068 with the FDD disk system. Sadly, though, he's called it quits as far as T/S goes. He writes:

Happy New Year Jay,

I am glad to see that someone is publishing a newsletter for those interested in those with this system. Due to the demise of "Time Designs", "SyncWare News", "SyncLink", "FDD Express" and the changeover of the editors of "UPDATE", I switched over to MS-DOS in the form of a Tandy 1000HX. I never did get into CP/M as I never found a BASIC language, a BASIC compiler, or an Assembler/Disassembler in a format for the 3" drives. In addition there was no magazine interested in publishing articles or programs for CP/M.

All of my Timex equipment is for sale.

2-TS1500s with 32 column printers

1-TS2068 with FDD 3000, AERCo Parallel Interface, Zebra OS-64, Smith-Corona Fastex 80 Dot Matrix Printer, CP/M disk, etc.

1-TS2068 with 32 column printer, LarKen LKDOS V3 cartridge with 256k RAMDisk, McMichael's Serial Interface w/Commodore VIC-1520 plotter/printer

1-Zebra Graphic Tablet
1-Zebra Talker
1-Light Pen
1-Zebra OS-64 Cartridge
Misc Software, Books, Magazines

Thanks for sending the copies of your Newsletter. I am enclosing a ten dollar check. Please remove me from your mailing list for the newsletter.

Best Wishes for a Happy New Year,

Earl Dunnington

Earl's address is:
12198 Forest Greens Drive
Boynton Beach, Florida
33437

Well, Ike, maybe you might want to take a hike over there by Earl & check things out before you head back to W. Va.

Of all the letters I received, the next one mailed to me by Jack Dohany of Redwood City, California, dated 01/04/92 is the most important letter of all the ones that I'm printing in this newsletter, so pay close attention!

Hi Jay,

I noted in the FDD Newsletter V1 N5 that you wanted a copy of Tech Draw Sr. You will find it on Side A of the enclosed disk. This is also called V2.1, or Tech Draw Plus.

On side B you will find my improved version of Tech Draw, called V3.0. Documentation for it is also on the disk, in the form of two MScript text files called TD3doc1 and 2. If you don't have MScript, you can load, view, and print these text files using MPRINT, which was put on Side A since it wouldn't fit on Side B. Holler if you can't print the docs, and I'll send hardcopies.

I don't want any money from you for this disk. Indeed, I still feel in your debt for all the CP/M disks you sent me a while back. I have been planning, and still do plan, to send you a new Zebra Disk interface... as soon as I find time to get one wired up; it takes about 12 hours to wire one up! I keep trying to find time to design and produce a printed-circuit-board version of the new interface, to save the time spent in hand-wiring them. Maybe one of these days! The new interface is much better than the original, since no twister is required.

I'm also working on a general-purpose "MOUSE driver" that will enable the Radio Shack Color Mouse to be used in BASIC. It will also support MicroSoft-compatible serial mice (such as the Logitech C-7) via any of several serial interfaces (ZSIO, AERCo or FDD). When that's done, a plan to work on Tech Draw V4.0, which will work with MicroSoft serial mice, as well as devices supported by V3.0.

I now have the capability of programming 20-pin and 24-pin PAL chips, using my IBM clone and an MCT PAL programming device. I expect to use this capability to make some interesting new 2068 products, which will be marketed through RMG and Ed Grey and possibly other dealers. One such product is a combined Centronics and RS232C interface that will fit inside the 2068 and become part of it via a new 2068/Spectrum ROM.

You may recall that I asked you whether anyone had modified the Zebra CP/M system so that an applications program such as WordStar could use a printer interfaced to the 2068 bus... and you said no. Now you can say yes; I have modified the BIOS and monitor software for that purpose. If you or anyone needs this capability, they can contact me. They'd need to send me $10, or $5 + a blank 3" disk, or just $5 if they can use something other than a 3" disk.

The really big project I'm working on is modifying the Zebra CP/M BIOS for use with 360k and 720k disk drives. I'm not sure when the new BIOS will be available; it may be quite a while. I'm also not sure what the new BIOS will cost; probably a nominal $20, since there's no way to charge for my time; this project will take heaps of time; I've already spent a solid month on it.

My current intention is that drive assignments in the new BIOS will be as follows:

Drives A,B will be 720k AERCo CP/M format (3.5"/5.25" DSDD80)
Drives C,D will be 360k AERCO CP/M format (5.25" DSDD40).
Drives E,F will be 140k Zebra CP/M format (3/3.5/5.25" SSDD40)
Drive G will be MORROW MD2 CP/M format (SSDD40)
Drive H will be MORROW MD3 CP/M format (DSDD40)
Drive I will be OSBORNE CP/M format (SSDD40)
(Other CP/M formats may also be supported. Any suggestions?)

The new FORMAT.COM will format disks in any of the above formats. PIP will copy files from disks of one format to disks of another format.

The current Zebra CP/M system occupies 8k. The new system will probably occupy 12k (3 system track rather than 2.)

The new monitor provided with the new BIOS will enable screen color selection, and display widths of 64 or 85 characters, as well as offering 2068 bus printer interface support as mentioned earlier.

Best Regards,
Jack

P.S. As long as I was printing this letter, thought I'd go ahead & print the TD3 documentation, to save you the trouble.

I want to thank you, Jack, for sending me that diskette. I enjoy using the Tech Draw Sr. program with my Koala pad & Zebra

A/D - D/A interface. No need to rush that new disk interface that you've promised me. I'd much rather see those BIOS changes that you've talked about. Tech Draw is so much more enjoyable with the Koala pad than rather using the joystick. By the way, does the new interface allow for hardware add-ons, such as the Zebra A/D - D/A, AERCO CPI-68, SMUG Digitizer, etc., as does the T-dock twister?

I'm impressed that you've been able to modify the BIOS to allow the Centronics-type parallel interface to work from within an applications program. Can the BIOS be changed to use the parallel interface to access an external hard drive just like the laptops do? I'll be sending you a formatted blank diskette & $5 sometime soon.

Have you been in touch with Mike Finn in Philadelphia, Pa.? He's been researching the CP/M BIOS for quite a while. It might do you some good to get in touch with him and swap pointers about our system in the CP/M mode.

As far as other formats, I'd really like to see the cassette tape EAR & MIC used for back-up purposes. In fact, the Digital Research CP/M alteration guide mentions that cassette tape can be assigned to the PTR: & PTP high-speed tape devices. Does our system know what EOF: & NUL: are when using PIP.COM? These will be needed when using the cassette as a high-speed PTP: & PTR:. Why use cassette as a back-up storage medium to back up the CF2 diskettes? The answer is simply: "Cost!". It would sure be cheaper to store back-ups of your favorite CP/M programs on cassette tape rather than another CF2 diskette. How about it, Jack? What do the rest of you think? Write to Jack Dohany with your suggestions or perhaps you want to purchase that modified CP/M BIOS disk so that you can now use your parallel printer under CP/M. Jack may be reached @:

390 Rutherford
Redwood City, California
94061
Telephone #: 1(415)367-7781

I received a couple of letters from Al E. Green of Tampa, Florida. The first one is dated 02/06/92. It reads:

To: Jay Siegel
From A.E. Green (AL)

Jay; I tried to get this letter out to you before the next newsletter, but I waited too long, so you can use it in the next one.

First, have you had any luck with the disks that I sent you on the CP/M programs? I found one more disk for the Amstrad that has some 2.2 programs on it but I can't print them out to the DMP 130 printer. The printer must be Epson; not Tandy or IBM.

Also have you done anything with the tapes? I was hoping to see something in the newsletter on this and not a reprint of the READTHIS.1ST. I already have 4 copies of this one.

I sent a letter to Japan to see if I could change the IBM ROM in the DMP-130 to the Epson ROM used in the Seikosha 1000A. If this can be done that would give me the Tandy and the [illegible] codes. No answer as of this date.

What did Zebra do to the Wico Trackball to get it to work with the T/S 2068 and/or the QL? I found one at a flea Market, but it won't work on the Timex without the Zebra modification.

After I got off the phone with you I tried to do what you told me, but I guess I forgot something because I could not get it to work. I did get the FDDUSER.DBF transfer to another disk but can't get it to load in dBASE II and print it out to the printer.

Speaking of modifications, here is one for those who have the Spectrum/Timex Emulator with the Timex Disk Drive interface (Jack Dohany EPROM). This is something I do know about.

Jack has two switches to set each mode, one on the interface and one on the computer. WHY! when one switch will work both EPROMs. What I have done was to remove the switch from the interface and replace it with a 5VDC micro mini relay Radio Shack (275-240) @ $1.99 ea. The contacts are wired just like the original switch with two exceptions; one side of the coil must be to ground and the other coil wire MUST go to pin 26B of the interface. This is because pin 26B is not used by the interface or the computer.
The only change to the computer is to add a wire from the unused pad that you put the signal diodes in. This wire also is soldered to pin 26B of the user bus. This wire supplies the 5VDC to operate the relay from the EPROM switch on the computer.
You cannot turn the computer on and have the interface in one mode and the computer in the other. I love it when a plan comes together.

Since I use the Super Board and not the T-dock, I cannot say if the pins on it are the same as mine, but pins 26B MUST be the same (Timex to Spectrum). If this pin goes to another pin, it must be removed, and a jumper placed on these two pins (26B to 26B). If you need a drawing on this, let me know.

Delmer Jerew (Ohio) just got an Oliger Disk interface from Oliger and two DSDD 3.5" drives with power supply from Jack Dohany. Del was in St. Pete for awhile and he dropped by with his system to see if I could get it to work. There are some commands on this system that I would like to see on our system, i.e., LET / S=n - this means single side or double sided where n is 1 or 2, respectively. LET / T=n - this means 40 or 80 track. FORMATted to the max is 795k per disk. And the system is fast. Since both systems use EPROMs to control the interface, could one use the Oliger EPROM in the Timex and read a disk that was saved by this system (with the proper drives?)

Timex Command Cartridge, all of them will LOAD & RUN on my modified 2068 except pinball and it crashes. I thought that it was burned out until my wife was playing it on her machine. I tried it out on 3 more machines and it worked perfectly, but not on mine, WHY? This was before I installed the Spectrum/Timex EPROM.

Chuck Dawson's START program will not work in the Spectrum mode. What do I do to fix this one? Also, is there a way to get Spectrum programs on Timex disk? Someone sent me a tape of some copy programs for the Spectrum, but they only copy to tape.

The interface for the TS 2040 printer and the TS 2050 modem: I don't use them any more. Can you find out if one of them can be modified to an RS232C interface. The Oliger system needs a serial interface and this would be the best way to get one.

The 80 column software driver, were you going to send me a copy on the disk that I sent you?

From the desk of a SINCLAIR Nut:

Al Green

In Al's other letter to me, dated 02/16/92, he writes:

Jay:

I got the disk back Friday and am having trouble LOADing. I hope there is nothing wrong with my drives. I can't afford to get them fixed right now.

BOOT.BAS check line no. 310?
BOOTSPEC.BAS check line no. 190?
BASIC_64.BAS HARDWARE FAULT ON DISK TMX_64 check line 270

I reFORMATted side A of the disk but left side B like it was.

Every time I use the BACKUP utility on the Master copy of TOS I get the same results.

I had to return two CF2 disks to Maxell, one side of the disk would not FORMAT. They sent me two replacement disks that were OK. If you get any bad disks, sent them to:

Attn: Mr. Ed Peters
MAXELL Corporation of America
1400 Parker Road
Conyers, GA, 30207

There is a lot of differences between the software version and the 64 column cartridge version. I LOADed the cartridge software while in the software version and it's all screwed up, WHY?

Enclosed is return postage so you can copy the program over and return it as soon as you can. What I did see is great. Too bad Timex did not use this as the standard OS.

Will this work on the Oliger system or is it only for the Timex FDD drives?

See you later; Al Green

I'm going to answer your first letter first & your second letter second, Al. I've copied the tapes; however, one was no good. I could not get it to LOAD in. The software does indeed work with the device that it is claimed to. Have you heard anything from Japan about your printer? I don't know what Zebra did to get the Wico Trackball to work. Maybe it just needs to be wired differently? Yes, I would appreciate a schematic drawing of the hardware modification that you described about in the first letter. The only thing similar at all concerning the LET / commands on the Oliger system is our undocumented FORMAT * "B" TO "diskname.ext"d - where the letter "d" at the very tail end of the command doubles the density, as well as the number of disk sides being FORMATted from 1 to double-sided. You must have a DSDD disk drive to take advantage of this command. Otherwise, you just leave off the final letter "d" when using the FORMAT * command. It gets a little bit more complicated than just having EPROMs accessing some disk interface. I just don't think that it's possible to use the Oliger system under the FDD - or vice versa for that matter. I think that the reason that your Pinball cartridge is crashing on your modified 2068 is some hardware addressing conflict. I'm only guessing here. Can anyone help Al out? As far as Chuck Dawson's START program not working in the Spectrum mode, I would venture a guess that it must be due to a system call that does not exist under Spectrum or if it does that it's in a different location. Anyone else have an idea? If you'd like Spectrum programs on disk, maybe Mike Potter can help you out. He is the person that I would consider if it can be put on the FDD disk in the Spectrum mode, Mike knows about it. I am not the one who could help you out here. Maybe Mike could provide you and/or me with a list of software titles for the FDD in the Spectrum mode. The 2050 modem can definitely be converted to an RS232C device. There have been articles published in the defunct Time Designs magazine detailing this modification. Thinking about this one further, I don't think what I explained is what you had in mind or what you really want. I've never heard anything about converting a 2040 printer to an RS232C device.

Now to reply to the second letter. Sorry that I sent you a bum diskette. A good copy should be on its way to you. Let me know if that one is any better. Thanks a million for the address to return defective Maxell CF2 diskettes. I've got almost a full box of 10. Again, I would say that there must be some hardware and/or software conflicts when using the OS-64 column cartridge and the 80 column software driver. Finally, yes, the

80 column software driver will work on the Oliger system.

I received a letter from Gary L. Lessenberry, formerly of Great Lakes N.T.C., now of Havelock, North Carolina, dated 02/10/92. It reads:

Hi Jay,

How's life treating you these days? I'm doing pretty well. I returned from Japan last August and am now stationed along the North Carolina coast. My family would rather be in Chicago, but they'll survive two more years here until I retire and move back there.

I still keep in regular contact with Phoenix Pete Fischer. He's doing well. Between his Sinclairs, IBMs and Macs, I've come to think of him as the man of a thousand systems. It's rather interesting that those friendships that have evolved from the Timex community continue long after moving on to other hardware. Perhaps it's because so many of us that grew up with our Sinclairs really are very much alike. I'm still heavy into telecommunications, although North Carolina is telecomm purgatory. There are perhaps a dozen BBSes within my calling range and they're all clones of one another. Very little imagination or originality has gone into any of them. Being away from big city telecommunications is hell!

I've finally decided to let go of all my excess T/S equipment. Please pass on this information to anybody who may be interested. I'm hoping to sell the entire lot together for $250, but I'm not firm on that. Anyway, the items are:

QTY	ITEM
1	T/S-2068 with the following modifications: Spectrum ROM Switch Mechanical Keyboard Reset Switch Speaker ON/OFF Switch.
1	Ampex Composite Color Monitor
1	JLO FDD System with 780k Disk Drive (cased with power supply)
1	Centronics Printer Interface
1	T/S 2040 Printer
1	Wicc Trackball
4	T/S 2050 Modems (3 have cables and are tested good)
5	EPROM cards (one with an MTerm II EPROM)
2	Joysticks
2	Disk Drives (360k 5.25" & 720k 3.5") both are flaky
300+	Timex & Spectrum commercial programs

Don't worry, I am not completely bailing out of the Timex community. Although most of my concentration is on IBM compatible systems these days, I will still maintain one 2068 system and my original ZX-81. They are great computers and I truly love working with them. Unfortunately, I'm trying to learn as much as I can about mainstream systems to increase my employability once I retire from the Marines. Oh well, enough rambling for now. Take care Jay!

Gary

Well, Gary, it's good to hear from you again. You readers out there should know that Gary is heavily involved in telecommunications. So much so that when he was living in Great Lakes N.T.C., Illinois, the telephone company called his home & asked his wife why so many (long-distance) calls & why so long? They were checking up to see if he possibly ran a bookmaking operation. She told the telephone company representative that Gary has a computer & a modem. "Oh, I understand now what those calls are about!", the representative said and then hung-up.

I'd love to get that color composite monitor, as well as the 300+ programs, but alas, I'm perpetually short of that green stuff, known as money. Maybe the T/SNUG might be able & interested in the "estate" purchase. For those of you who are considering purchasing any or all the above listed items from Gary Lessenberry, you may reach him at:

12 Allegheny Road
Havelock, North Carolina
28532
Telephone #: 1(919) 444-3895

If his wife answers and tells you that Gary isn't around and that she doesn't know when he'll be back, leave a message with her. This is because Gary works for the Marines and his wife is not at liberty to say that Gary is participating in Military exercises somewhere else. Leave her a message & Gary will be sure to get back to you.

I received a letter from Dave Bennett of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He writes:

Dear Jay,

Thanks for sending your Newsletter. I find it to be an excellent well written Newsletter. I produced a Newsletter for three years so I know what it is like.

However the Harrisburg Area Timex Sinclair Users Group no longer exists. And there are no local users of the FDD system. I was the only local user of a 2068 Disk System. It was the AERCo FD-68.

Your Newsletter does bring back some fond memories of using CP/M on the FD-68 (It's equivalent is known as RP/M on the AERCO - ed. note). I no longer have a 2068. I sold it a couple years ago.

Right now I have three computers. A Sinclair QL, a Cambridge Z88, and a MacIntosh Classic. I have pretty much abandoned the "Command" based operating system in favor of the more modern "Icons/Windows/Menus" operating system.

So it is OK to discontinue mailing your Newsletter to me. You can save yourself the postage and copying costs.
Sincerely,
Dave

Next issue - reviews of N/Ls I've rcvd since 11/91. Bye!
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